

John Macpherson Berrien to Andrew Jackson, April 9, 1829, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JOHN M. BERRIEN TO JACKSON.1

1 Berrien, Attorney General since Mar. 9, was now offered the mission to Great Britain. See Van Buren, *Autobiography*, p. 257.

New York, April 9, 1829.

Dear Sir, Your letter of the 6th inst. reached me this morning. If any thing had been wanting to convince me, how much I am, and am destined to remain, your debtor, for a confidence as gratuitous, as it is gratifying, that evidence is now afforded me. I beg you to be assured my dear Sir, that as no one of your political friends attaches a higher value to your good opinion, so I would yield to no one in the devotion of my very humble powers, to the success of your administration, to the advancement of those two objects which I consider identified [with] your personal fame, and the public welfare. With the view therefore, which you are pleased to take of my capacity to render service in the station to which you have invited me, it is matter of unfeigned regret to me, notwithstanding my distrust of my competency to discharge the duties of this highly important mission, that the situation of my private affairs forbids its acceptance.

Torn as your own heart has been by calamity, I need not enter upon the detail of my private sorrows, to convince you, that my duty to the little children of whom I am now the sole surviving protector, would not justify the separation, which the duties of this mission would inevitably demand. The state of my professional engagements, and the situation of my planting interests, would also make it extremely injurious to me, to leave the United

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States during the present year. Mr. Tazewell intimated his wishes to me on this subject, on the contingency of his being unable to accept, in the last conversation we had before he left Washington, and I endeavored to explain to him fully and more in detail, than the limits of a letter admit, why I could not undertake this service. I regret extremely that he has declined it.

I propose to proceed to *Savannah* in a vessel which sails on the eleventh inst. Any commands, which you may have for me there, shall be promptly attended to. Meanwhile allow me to repeat the assurance of the respect and gratitude with which I am Dr sir